

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

The Status of the Claims

C1

1-35. (Previously Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to estimate ~~A method for estimating~~ future profits for farms in a region of interest for growing a crop of interest, ~~the method comprising the steps of~~ by performing at least the following:

identifying farms in the region of interest;

electronically accessing at least one on-line market to ascertain at least one current market price for at least one product different than the crop of interest;

determining projected profits to each of the farms in the region of interest for growing products different than the crop of interest based at least partially on the at least one current market price;

selecting at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest on at least some of the farms in the region of interest;

determining profits to be earned by the at least some of the farms for growing the crop of interest; and

summing the profits to be earned by the farms in the region of interest for growing the crop of interest.

C2

37. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for determining a price to offer a farmer to grow a crop of interest comprising:

a database containing current market price data for crops which are different from the crop of interest;

a profit estimator in communication with the database for estimating a profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

a product selector cooperating with the profit estimator to select a crop from the at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

CD
a production estimator cooperating with the product selector for estimating a quantity of the crop of interest to be produced by a farmer on acreage associated with the crop selected by the product selector; and

a pricing engine cooperating with the production estimator to develop a price to be offered the farmer of interest to grow the quantity of the crop of interest estimated by the production estimator based at least in part on the profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing the crop selected by the product selector.

38. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to determine ~~A method for determining~~ a price to offer a farmer to grow a crop of interest ~~comprising the steps of~~ by performing at least the following:

accessing a database containing current market price data for crops which are different from the crop of interest;

estimating a profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

selecting a crop from the at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

estimating a quantity of the crop of interest to be produced by a farmer on acreage associated with the selected crop; and

developing a price to be offered the farmer of interest to grow the estimated quantity of the crop of interest based at least in part on the profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing the selected crop which is different than the crop of interest.

39. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~A method~~ as defined in claim 38 wherein ~~the step of~~ developing a price further comprises ~~the steps of~~:

identifying a risk factor associated with the farmer of interest; and

adjusting the price to be offered the farmer of interest to grow the quantity of the crop of interest based at least in part upon the risk factor.

40. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to develop ~~A method for developing~~ economic information relating to activities of farms ~~comprising the steps of~~ by performing at least the following:

identifying farms capable of growing a crop of interest;

electronically accessing at least one on-line market to ascertain at least one current market price for at least one product different than a crop of interest;

determining projected profits to the identified farms for growing at least one product different than the crop of interest based at least partially upon the at least one current market price;

selecting at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest on at least some of the identified farms based at least in part upon the projected profits;

estimating an economic effect that substituting the crop of interest for the at least one of the products will have on at least one of: (a) a transportation market; (b) a commodity market; (c) demand for storage space; (d) land usage; (e) a price of at least one of the at least one of the products; (f) supply of at least one product; (g) demand for at least one input to a farm;-.

C2
41. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~A method~~ as defined in claim 40 further comprising ~~the step of~~ taking market action based upon the estimated economic effect.

42. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~A method~~ as defined in claim 40 wherein the commodity market is associated with at least one of the at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest.

43. (Previously Withdrawn) A method for securing a resource for growing crops comprising the steps of:

developing a set of farms capable of growing a crop of interest;

estimating profits to be earned by farms in the set of farms for growing at least one crop which is different from the crop of interest;

analyzing at least one of the estimated profits and estimated yields of the farms to identify an undervalued resource; and

taking market action to secure the identified undervalued resource.

44. (Previously Withdrawn) A method as defined in claim 43 wherein the undervalued resource comprises at least one of land and storage space.

45. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to reduce ~~A method for reducing~~ risk associated with contracting to grow ~~growing~~ a crop of interest ~~comprising the steps of~~ by performing at least the following:

identifying farms capable of growing a crop of interest;

electronically accessing at least one on-line market to ascertain at least one current market price for at least one product different than a crop of interest;

determining projected profits to each of the identified farms for growing products different than the crop of interest based at least partially upon the at least one current market price;

selecting at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest on at least some of the identified farms based at least in part upon the projected profits; and

selecting a subset of the identified farms to grow the crop of interest based on the profit that the identified farms can expect to earn by growing the crop which is replaced by the crop of interest and upon at least one risk associated with the geographic location of the identified farms.

46. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~A method~~ as defined in claim 45 wherein the at least one risk comprises at least one of weather risk and logistics risk.

47. (Previously Withdrawn) A method for managing inventory relating to growing a crop of interest to an agricultural entity comprising the steps of:

identifying farms capable of growing the crop of interest;
selecting farms from the identified farms to grow the crop of interest;
contracting with at least some of the selected farms to grow the crop of interest; and
managing the inventory based at least in part on contractual commitments made by the selected farms.

C2 48. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~A method~~ as defined in claim 41 wherein the market action is taken by at least one of an electronic buying agent and an electronic selling agent.

49-50. (Previously Cancelled)

51. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to estimate ~~A method for estimating~~ an effect growing a crop of interest will have on a region of interest ~~comprising the steps of~~ by performing at least the following:

identifying farms in the region of interest which are capable of growing the crop of interest;

determining a first set of aggregated projected inputs and outputs of the farms in the region of interest for growing products different than the crop of interest;

selecting at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest on at least some of the farms in the region of interest;

CD
determining a second set of aggregated projected inputs and outputs of farms in the region of interest assuming the at least some of the farms replace the at least one of the products with the crop of interest; and

computing a difference between the first and second sets of aggregated inputs and outputs to estimate at least one effect growing the crop of interest will have on the region of interest.
